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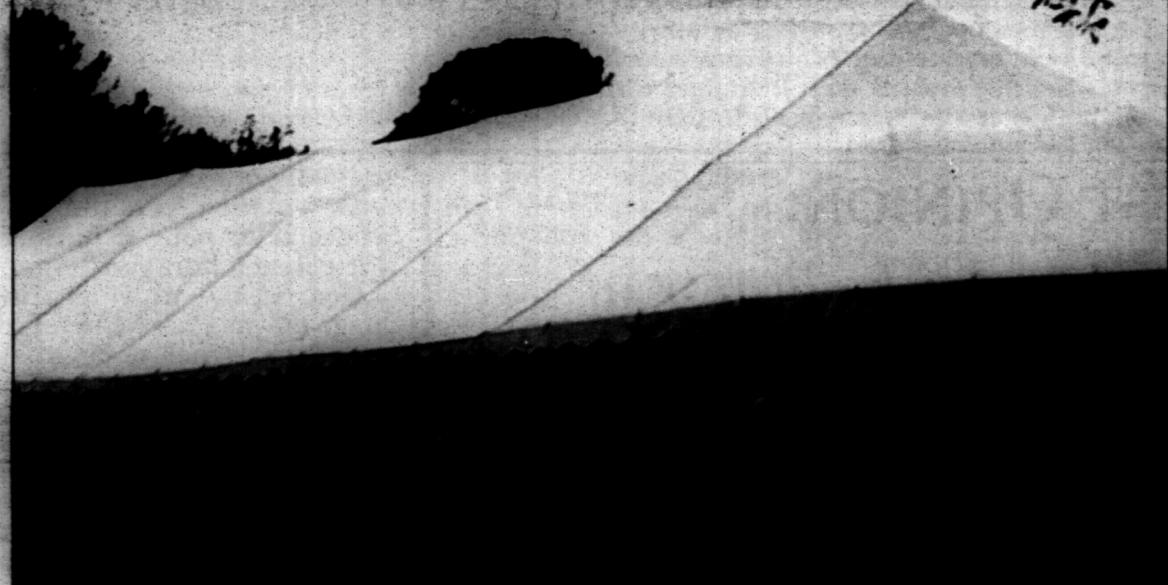
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FULL HOUSE — The large tent designed to seat over 1200 people is nearly filled to capacity on Tuesday night of the Copiah County Celebrate Jesus 2000 Crusade. The tent was set up on the property of the Copiah Association, just east of Hazlehurst. (Photo by Carl M. White)



Copiah tent crusade sees 164 professions

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

A total of 164 people were saved during a five-day crusade held April 30-May 4 under a tent on the property of Copiah Association east of Hazlehurst, according to John McBride, local director of missions.

Called the Celebrate Jesus 2000 Crusade, McBride said there were 64 professions of faith on Tuesday evening alone.

Preaching for the crusade was Ronnie Owens, an evangelist from Tazewell, Tenn. Leading music was Bo Parker, a music evangelist from Columbia.

"I've never given direction to anything this large before that went so smoothly. It was evident the Lord was in it," McBride said.

"It was bathed in prayer from the beginning. I'm too old to do anything without God," he added.

McBride has announced plans to retire in October of this year.

Planning for the crusade began over a year ago. Early on it was decided that this

would be a county-wide event, open to all races and all believers.

Co-chairmen were enlisted. Ted Duke, pastor of First Church, Crystal Springs, along with Martin Washington, pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, served as leaders for the evangelistic effort.

"This was the first interracial crusade ever in Copiah County, as far as I am aware," McBride added.

During the five nights of the revival, Price used different styles of music representing both black and white traditions, McBride said.

McBride also praised the preaching of Owens, and especially how he handled the invitation.

"Owens gave the invitation with integrity, no manipulation. He made it simple, easy, but he did not compromise the message or manipulate people."

Attendance was strong each night, with an estimated crowd of 1,350 people on Thursday, the last night of the crusade.

"On Wednesday night it poured down rain about one hour before. We still had over 900 people that night," McBride said.

In addition, McBride said there were 24-25 pastors present each evening. Copiah Association has 29 churches.

The crusade took place on the 14 acres of property east of Hazlehurst that the association purchased two years ago. A tent designed for as many as 1200 people was set up on the lawn. Nursery and preschool care was provided in the association's building, called The Master's House.

Jesus is the ONE AND ONLY WAY
Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Rom. 10:13

LIFTING PRAISE — The trio called Sisters sings under the tent at the Copiah County Celebrate Jesus 2000 crusade. They are (from left): Laura Pickard, First Church, Hazlehurst; Sarah Beth Watkins, First Church, Crystal Springs; and Sarah Beasley, First Church, Crystal Springs. (Photo by Carl M. White)

McBride said the house had burned before the property was purchased. With volunteer labor from the churches, it was rebuilt to provide office space, meeting space, and in the future will have dormitory space for retreats and mission groups. The building has over 5,000 square feet.

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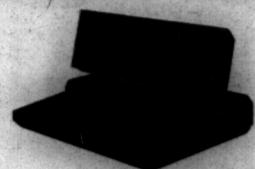
work of \$1 million for the benchmark executive director-vention Board (MBCB). This was 25.4% below March giving of \$1.3 million. Below April 1999 giving of \$1.1 million. This was the seventh highest month of the last 24 months have recorded CP giving, and the prior three months of the new year have recorded CP gifts of over \$2.5 million. The year 2000 total \$9,601,296, which is 1.07% from the previous year but still ahead of this year's budget by 2.7%. The 2000 CP budget as set by messengers to the 1999 Mississippi Baptist Convention is \$28,083,349. Mississippi CP funds such programs as the Senior Adult Conferences on May 15-17, May 18-20, and May 22-26 at Gulfshore Assembly in Pens Christian; the African-American Church Leadership Institute on May 19-20 at Emmanuel Church, Meridian; the Southern Missions Conference on May 27-

National SBC Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. 1.74% compared to 1999's total of \$27,000,000. Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee member, said, "For April, 2000, SBC CP gifts total \$349,559.19 above April 1999's total of \$340,000. To date, CP giving is 5.86% above the same period in the Sept. 30 fiscal year. At the end of April, a total of \$1,000,000 has been received, compared to last year's mark of \$93,090,516.75." For the SBC CP Allocation Budget, the total is \$104,170,514.81, or \$2,792,063.30 above the 1999 total of \$101,377,451.21. The 1999 total was \$93,090,516.75.

In designated gifts for April, \$11,060,293.30 was reported, which is 1.05% or \$114,586.27 above April 1999's total of \$10,955,707.00. Designated gifts totals for the year to date are \$12,563,714.69 compared to the same period a year ago of \$105,515,818.55, an increase of 6.4% or \$817,803.64.

The SBC CP total includes receipts from individuals, corporations, foundations, and other organizations.

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Chen Zixiu was a 58-year old grandmother who spent 30 years making auto parts in a Chinese government-owned factory in Weifang. A widow who lived alone for the past 20 years, she found herself hungry for spiritual meaning and joined an exercise group called Falun Dafa.

An article by Ian Johnson in the April 20 issue of The Wall Street Journal tracked Chen's ultimately tragic search for spirituality in the largest officially-atheist country in the world.

The Falun Dafa system of exercises, known as Falun Gong, includes breathing and relaxation techniques, meditation, and a special time to study the teachings of the group's founder, Li Hongzhi. It is not Christian.

According to Johnson's article, which was based on interviews and correspondence with people who knew Chen, she thrived under the Falun Gong regimen and became one of the millions of followers who found peace through adherence to its principles.

Leaders of the communist government soon discovered to their horror that Falun Gong practitioners included officials in the central government, the police apparatus, and the military.

They declared the group an "evil cult" and ordered an immediate crackdown. Chen was rounded up in the dragnet and imprisoned in order to facilitate her reeducation in the ways of communism.

The Falun Gong Education Study Class, as it was euphemistically named by the communists, included vicious beatings, intense isolation, and psychological torture. Chen was ordered to turn her back on Falun Gong and again swear her fealty to the communist way of life.

"All she had to do was say she renounced Falun Gong and they would have let her go, but she refused," Zhang Xueling, Chen's 32-year-old daughter, told Johnson.

What an interesting dilemma this Sunday presents. It's Mother's Day. Certainly some words of encouragement and thankfulness are in order. After all, where would we be without mothers?

Sunday, however, is also Senior Recognition Day at many of our churches — that special day set aside to honor graduating high school seniors. Certainly they are also deserving of special recognition on their own watershed day.

So what's a pastor to do? He cannot be expected to choose between moms and seniors, but wait — are not motherhood and seniorhood but the two ends of a common experience? So today we will honor both groups (I learned creative problem solving from my mom. Thanks, mom.)

What an interesting paradox this Sunday presents. All across the nation, churches will stop to pay tribute to the importance of the role of motherhood. At the same time, however, that moms are being adorned with flowers and recognized for their care and devotion to their children, many of those same children will adorn themselves in cap and gown, preparing to walk

For want of a witness

It wasn't long before her daughter was informed by government officials that Chen had died of a heart attack, but when Zhang saw her mother's body in a local hospital, she fainted. Chen's calves were black from beatings. Six-inch welts covered her back. Her teeth were broken and her ear was swollen and blue.

Zhang was led away and told later that her mother's body was cremated.

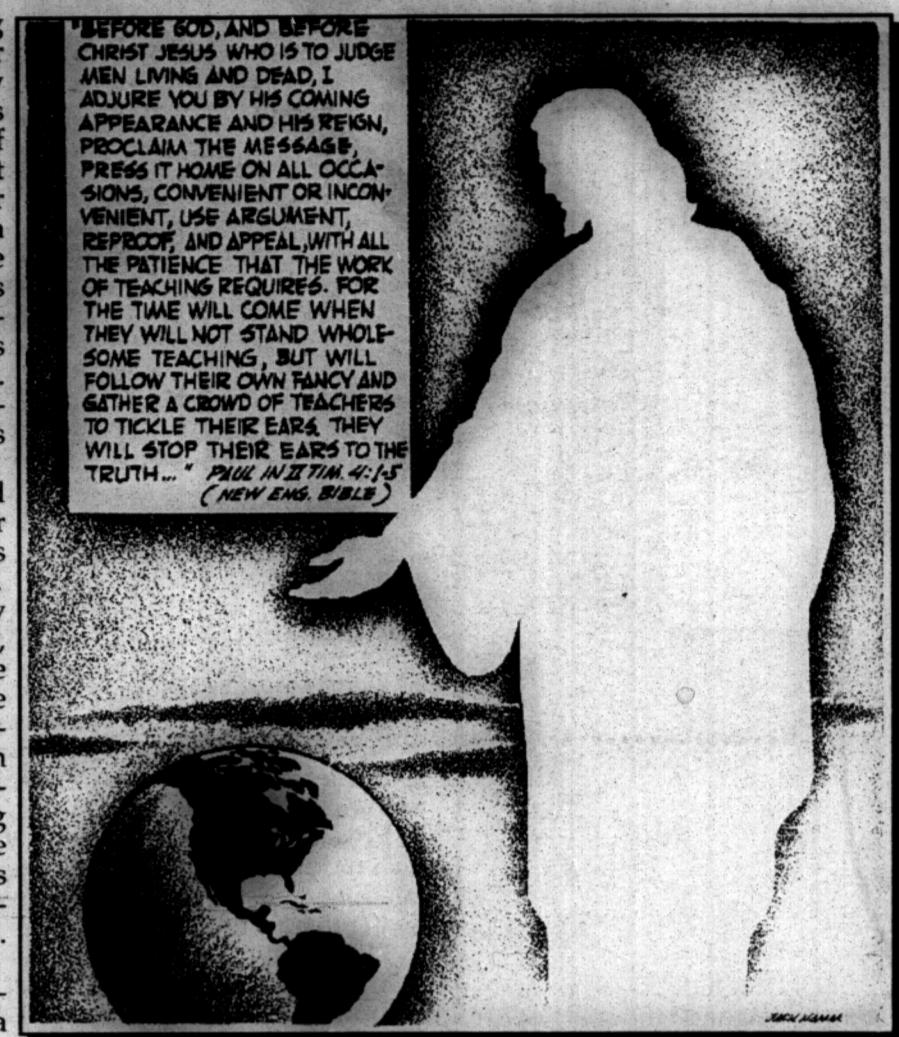
There are many morals to this sad, brutal story. The first is that this is the country that, amazingly, has American politicians and businessmen jumping through hoops like trained circus dogs in an effort to normalize relations. Why is that?

Secondly, Americans are indeed a fortunate lot. In the

2,000-year history of Christianity, the freedom and openness to worship and witness that we enjoy is a rare exception to the malignity, torture, and genocide that millions of believers have suffered for professing faith in Jesus.

Thirdly and most importantly, it should be obvious that Chen Zixiu and millions of people like her are starving for spiritual fulfillment and, failing to find anyone who can share the Gospel with them, are turning in desperation to any pseudo-faith that

"BEFORE GOD, AND BEFORE CHRIST JESUS WHO IS TO JUDGE MEN LIVING AND DEAD, I ADJURE YOU BY HIS COMING APPEARANCE AND HIS REIGN, PROCLAIM THE MESSAGE. PRESS IT HOME ON ALL OCCASIONS, CONVENIENT OR INCONVENIENT, USE ARGUMENT, REPROOF, AND APPEAL, WITH ALL THE PATIENCE THAT THE WORK OF TEACHING REQUIRES. FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT STAND WHOLE-SOME TEACHING, BUT WILL FOLLOW THEIR OWN FANCY AND GATHER A CROWD OF TEACHERS TO TICKLE THEIR EARS. THEY WILL STOP THEIR EARS TO THE TRUTH..." PAUL IN 2 TIM. 4:1-5 (NEW ENG. BIBLE)



is available. They are willing to give their lives, but they die in damnation for want of a Christian witness.

We should therefore be doubling, and redoubling, and redoubling again our dedication to the mission left to us by our Savior to provide a Gospel witness to every living person on earth (Matt. 28:18-20).

The task is large, and we have less time than we think to accomplish our mission before Jesus comes again — and he is coming again. Will he find us faithful?

GUEST OPINION:

In honor of Moms and seniors

By Grant Arinder, pastor
First Church, Ridgeland

across one stage of life and into a new one.

It is a beautiful yet interesting picture. The same mom who has sheltered her child beneath her wing now watches as her child takes flight. On the same day we will praise our moms for loving their children and keeping them safe at their sides, and then we will ask them to turn those same children loose and let them learn on their own.

On Mother's day, moms throughout the nation will take time to dedicate their newborn babies to the Lord, while moms of graduates will look on in amazement wondering where the years have gone.

We will give some of our children certificates of dedication and some diplomas, and in both cases mothers will cry

as they are asked in different ways to give their babies away.

What an awesome responsibility is motherhood. To mother a child is to be responsible for its nurture and well-being. It's late nights and early mornings. It's watching for rising temperatures and sinking hearts. It's ear infections and diaper rashes, football games and bicycle crashes.

It's a driver's license, or is it training wheels? It's anxiety attacks and Coke spills. It's a first date and staying out too late. It's reports cards and progress reports, new math and gym shorts. It's Barney, baseball, and boyfriends.

You see, graduates, motherhood is everything you do and have ever done, because whether you know it or not, your mother went through each part of it with you. She celebrated your successes and

grieved your hurts. She felt every emotion you did, and believe it or not, "it hurt her worse than it hurt you."

Here is the truly amazing thing: the toughest part of all for moms is not doing these things; it's not being able to do them anymore that she really finds difficult.

So, graduates, forgive your moms even if they still try to brush your hair or straighten your collar or feel your forehead for a temperature. They came by these jobs honestly and they are hard to relinquish.

Moms, forgive your children for fighting for their independence. Remember that if you taught them well, then this is what they should be doing — but don't be surprised if, on the other end of some shattered dream, they show up at your door needing a hug. This independence thing is hard to learn.

What will we learn from it all? Moms, you will learn that your children are a lot more prepared than you thought. Graduates, you will learn that you are not nearly as ready as you believed.

Then, just as it as happened for generations, you will both meet somewhere in the middle. You will both meet at a place called common ground.

Famine threatens Ethiopia; IMB mobilizes

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP) — Southern Baptists have mobilized to help some of the 7.7 million people threatened by an emerging famine in southeastern Ethiopia.

Thanks to a God-inspired gift, workers were able to begin helping even before the crisis hit television screens in the United States.

Three years of drought have

destroyed crops and devastated livestock in Ethiopia and six neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa. Regional conflicts are making the delivery of relief supplies difficult, and children and the weak have begun dying from malnutrition-related illnesses.

A 1984-85 famine in Ethiopia — which claimed 1 million lives — shocked the world with televised images of starving people. Now the United Nations estimates as many as 16 million people in seven countries are in danger. Governments are trying to deliver massive amounts of grain to the region, hoping a full-blown famine can be averted.

Southern Baptists are working with fellow Baptists and Great Commission Christians, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGO), to minister to people who might not be reached by the large-scale programs, said a missions strategist focusing on the region.

ONE LIFE SAVED — Volunteer nurse Mary Saunders comforts the mother of Moses, an infant rescued from the brink of death by Southern Baptist relief efforts during the 1984-85 famine in Ethiopia. (BP photo by Don Rutledge)

relief efforts," said the missionary, who asked that his name be withheld for security reasons. "We want to mount a response with a more human face than the massive relief projects and put Southern Baptist money and help where it will benefit some of the more forgotten people."

For example, Southern Baptists will assist one NGO in a water development project that should help people weather future droughts, he said. They also are helping churches minister to refugees who are streaming into cities from the countryside and will help deliver grain to places where it's too dangerous for government workers to go.

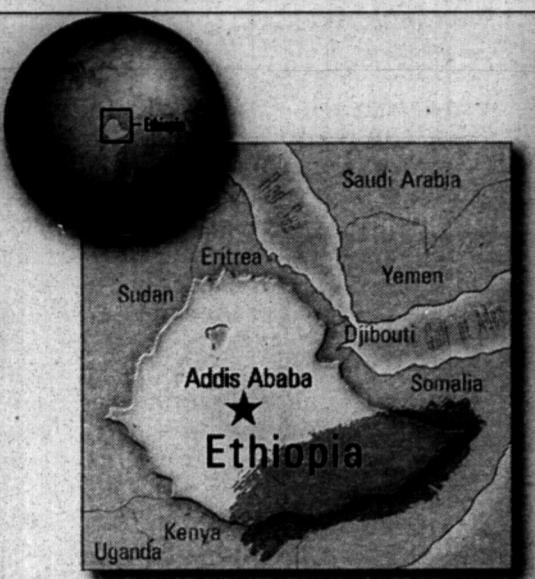
"In some places, people have gone to the edge and there's nothing left," said the worker, who just returned from a survey trip in the area. "We're trying to make sure people aren't forced to eat their seed grain, so they'll be able to plant if the rains come."

Southern Baptist workers, who have been dealing with the problem for six months, were delighted when an unexpected gift for Ethiopian hunger relief was received.

"Over a month and a half ago, before this crisis even hit the press, some Baptists sent us \$7,000 for Ethiopian hunger relief," he said. "We've been able to feed these people on the streets and work through these churches because God moved in the hearts of some Southern Baptists even before the big organizations started moving in."

"In some ways, that couple of loaves and couple of fish are being multiplied because they were there early. We're going to continue to do things that will multiply and make a long-term difference in the lives of people in the Horn of Africa."

Contributions to assist with



As many as 16 million people in seven countries are in danger from a three-year drought that has centered in southeastern Ethiopia



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THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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'Experiencing God' musical set

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (BP) — When representatives of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention approached Henry Blackaby to ask if they could write a musical based on his discipleship course, "Experiencing God," they got one question from him. "I asked them to tell me how they came to that [ideal]," Blackaby said. "As they described the process and the pilgrimage on which they sensed God was leading them, I felt a deep conviction of the heart that this was a work of God. I couldn't argue with that, since God was at work."

Hundreds of church musicians and worship leaders witnessed the product of that vision April 26 at the annual MUSICCalifornia conference in San Diego when "Experiencing God ... The Musical," published under LifeWay's Genevox imprint, premiered.

Written by Claire Cloninger and Gary Rhodes, the 70-minute work features original songs, along with some classic hymns, praise choruses, and contemporary Christian songs made popular by current artists. An interweaving of narration brought it under the umbrella of the "seven realities" discussed in Blackaby's work.

Earlier, a compact disc had been released by Sparrow Records and a LifeWay-produced book of songs inspired by the seven realities, but Blackaby said he could see the importance of another musical medium, as long as it was done sensitively.

In its short 10-year history, Experiencing God has been translated into more than 45 languages, and the workbook has sold more than 3.4 million copies worldwide, crossing denominational boundaries.

Information on ordering "Experiencing God... The Musical" is available by calling (800) GENEVOX.

Looking back

10 years ago

Mississippi native Morris Chapman of Texas visits Jackson, promoting his candidacy for president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He speaks of "enlarging the tent" of the conservative movement to include any Southern Baptist who will declare the Bible to be inerrant and infallible.

20 years ago

The Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Society holds its annual joint meeting in Louisville, Ky., to discuss the new controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention and denounce the group planning to control the election of the president for 10 years.

50 years ago

The largest baptismal service ever engaged by Baptists is planned following a two-week, intensive evangelistic effort by churches west of the Mississippi River. Southern Baptist Home Mission Board officials in Atlanta expect over 125,000 additions.

RESCUED FROM STARVATION — Though bland by the standards of normal Ethiopian cuisine, starving people are grateful for the high-protein porridge they received through the ministry of the Southern Baptist feeding center at Rabel, Ethiopia, during the 1984-85 famine in that country. Now Southern Baptist missionaries are mobilizing aid to 7.7 million people threatened by another famine emerging in the country. (BP photo by Don Rutledge)

Miss. ministry assistants gather at Garaywa

By Linda Jenkins
Correspondent

For two days in April, approximately 170 Mississippi Baptist secretaries "flattered" around Camp Garaywa in Clinton.

The theme for the 2000 State Ministry Assistants Conference, "Butterflies are free and so are we!" was based on John 8:36: So if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free (The Living New Testament, Paraphrased).

The annual event, formerly known as the Mississippi Baptist Secretaries Conference, attracts ministry assistants from across the state

and even some from the neighboring state of Louisiana. Attendees include ministry assistants from the Baptist Building in Jackson, church secretaries, secretaries from Baptist agencies such as colleges, medical centers, and children's homes, associational secretaries, and others who seek to update their skills through inspiration, information, and encouragement.

The conference agenda included special-



NEW OFFICERS — Officers for the Mississippi Baptist Secretaries Association for 2000-01 include (from left) Vivian Taylor, Wayne Association, Waynesboro, president; Sandra Smith, Bay Springs Church, Bay Springs, first vice president; Julia Fields, Meadowood Church, Amory, second vice-president; and Robbie Linley, Winston Association, Louisville, secretary-treasurer. (Photo by Betty Anne Bailey)

Former Miss. pastor tapped by Md./Del.

COLUMBIA, Md. (BP and local reports) — The Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware's General Mission Board has unanimously approved the selection of former Mississippi pastor David Lee as the convention's new executive director.

Lee succeeds Charles Barnes, who retired from the post March 31. A native of North Carolina, Lee came to Maryland 12 years ago from Mississippi where he had pastored several churches since 1974. While in Mississippi, he also served as the director of ministries for the Jackson Association in Pascagoula.

Lee's undergraduate work was done at Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg. He earned both a master of divinity and a doctorate of ministry at New Orleans Seminary.

He and his wife, Sherry, have been married 29 years and have two married sons, both of whom are actively involved in vocational ministry, and two grandchildren.

Mississippi Baptists are currently involved in a three-year partnership with Baptists in Maryland and Delaware.

ized conferences, general sessions, worship, music, drama, secretarial skills update, a business session, and a Monday night banquet.

Other topics included office etiquette, home decorating tips, floral design, dressing for success, health tips, and weight management.

Robin Nichols, annuity representative for the church-minister relations and annuity department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), led a conference session and represented the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in assisting the secretaries with questions about their retirement benefits.

The conference participants also had the convenience of shopping at an on-site book store courtesy of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Mississippi Baptist Secretaries Association (MBSA) held their annual membership drive and conducted a business meeting during the Garaywa conference. Funds from a silent auction also went into the MBSA treasury.

Canned food and used clothing were collected for Crestwood Baptist Center in Jackson.

The State Ministry Assistants Conference is sponsored by the church administration-pastoral ministries department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Matt Buckles is department director, and Kay



PLANNING CONFERENCE — Mary Denson (left) of Jackson, conference leader at the State Ministry Assistants Conference, talks with conference coordinator Cheryl Townsend, pastor's secretary at Parkway Church, Clinton. (Photo by Betty Anne Bailey)

McDonnell is ministry assistant.

The 2000 conference program was planned and coordinated by Cheryl Townsend, pastor's secretary at Parkway Church, Clinton.

A Certification and Ministry Office Skillshop will be held at Camp Garaywa on August 15-17. For more information on that event and on MBSA matters, contact McDonnell at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3305 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail: kmcdonnell@mbcb.org.

A CHURCH WITH A BROKEN LEG

Have you ever seen a church with a broken leg, or possibly any of its bones broken? It happens. It happens all too frequently! I had lived all of my life without a broken bone. I had bruises and scrapes and had been stitched up from my head to my toe, but I had never broken anything.

Of course, I knew people who had broken an arm, or a leg, or a nose, or toes. While I had sympathy for them, it did not look like it was all that bad. All you had to do was go to the doctor, get a cast put on it, wait several weeks or months, and everything was alright. Yea, right! Then one day, while skating with a group of kids at church, I fell down and broke my leg. I knew when I hit the floor something bad was wrong and that I had never before experienced what happened to my leg at that moment. I did not know how bad it was; I only knew that it was bad!

Friends helped me up, got me into the car, and off to the emergency room we went. It was soon confirmed that I had broken bones and was facing surgery to repair the damage. Fine — let's get on with it because I've got things to do! In the emergency room, the doctor tried to tell me it wasn't going to be that easy — just getting "patched up" and "heading out" the door. I didn't realize what was ahead!

The Apostle Paul, on several occasions, used a word to describe what was going on in some churches that actually was a medical term to describe a broken bone. For instance, in Gal. 6:1, the Apostle says, "If any



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore." That word "restore" describes setting a bone and letting the knitting and healing process take place so that full health can be enjoyed again. This helps us understand what it is like when there is a fracture or a break in a church fellowship — it is like having a broken leg.

Look at the parallels:

It is often unintended. I have never known of someone who just decided, "I'm going to break one of my bones!" Yet, every week there is a spill, a fall, or an accident that results in a break. I am sure that Satan wants to come and bring pain to the people of God, but I do not believe that most Christians just set out to do something hurtful, crippling, or even destructive. Yet, it does happen.

It happens so quickly. How long does it take to break a bone? It takes less than a second. A perfectly healthy, strong bone can be cracked in a flash. As I was looking at my accident through my mental rearview mirror, I reflected on the thought of "if" those few seconds could be removed from that evening, everything would be all right. One moment I was standing up, skating, and enjoying a gathering of kids, and the next moment, from the time it took to fall three or four

feet to the ground, everything was dramatically changed.

A church can be healthy, happy, serving, and reaching out to others, and so quickly lose it all in a sudden break.

It is so painful and restrictive. I never knew what people were going through who had broken a bone. It hurts! Sometimes it hurts when you get up, and sometimes it hurts when you lay down, and sometimes it hurts when you are doing nothing. I thought after I got the screws and plate put in my leg, I could just simply get up and go on about business — even walk! When I found out that I couldn't walk, that I would be on crutches — well, that was still no big deal! Why, I could master those crutches and go on and do everything I wanted to do.

I will never forget the first morning at home after the surgery. I got up, got on my crutches, and made my way to the kitchen. Since I am the only coffee drinker in my house, I started making myself a pot of coffee. When the coffee was ready, I was ready. I poured a great big cup, picked it up with the intention of walking over to the table to sit down, and then realized I could not go anywhere! My dog was sitting there looking up at me, wanting to help, but he could-

n't. You cannot carry a cup of coffee on crutches! I looked at the coffee. I looked at my chair a few feet away. I looked down at the dog, and I thought, "What a predicament I'm in!"

So many times I have watched a local congregation go through some rupture, some break, some fracture of relationships, and suddenly the pain is deep and the restrictions are many. Someone may come with a word of encouragement and tell the church to just try harder, do more. Yet, sometimes there is nowhere to go, and nothing you can do to get the work done, because the break shapes everything.

Healing seems to be so slow. Whether I liked it or not, in this "fast and fix-it world," there was not much that could be done to rush the healing process. The body takes its naturally-designed time to slowly put things back together. Even after the wound healed from the surgery, and even after the bone had mended, I walked lightly. It was tender. In fact, I so clearly remember, about a year later, it occurred to me that I was walking without thinking about or favoring that broken leg.

In time, healing can take place. In time, you can be strong — walking, running, and working again — without the break dictating everything you do.

No doubt, a large portion of the saving, healing work of Jesus can be applied to many of our broken bones, fractured lives, and even crushed relationships. The Great Physician walks among us and wants to bring his touch to our lives. He wants to set the bones, and help us patiently wait while the mending takes place, soothed by his grace.

LifeWay Christian Store in Jackson honored

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Jackson's LifeWay Christian Store was honored earlier this month during the retailer's annual national sales meeting at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

Jerry Sager, manager of the Jackson Lifeway store, accepted the award for Best Operating Contribution (large store). Two other stores in the 87-store LifeWay chain were also recognized in the same category.

Managers gathered for training and inspirational activities, including a Christian merchandise exposition and a laser light/computer enhanced drama featuring Willie Aames as Bibleman, a Scripture-quoting video superhero for youngsters.

Aames previously starred on the network television series, *Eight is Enough*, and in several other television projects. (BP photo by Sharon Harper)



RECEIVING AWARD — Jerry Sager, (left) manager of LifeWay Christian Store in Jackson, was awarded First Place for Best Operating Contribution Percentage (large store) during the retailer's National Sales Meeting awards ceremony on May 1. Central regional director Zach Lang (right) oversees the store's operations for LifeWay. (BP photo by Sharon Harper)

Speakers included NFL Titans running backs coach Sherman Smith and best-selling author Jim Cymbala, pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle.

Smith spoke on the influence of faith on the Titans and the effect of belief on behavior and attitudes. He told LifeWay store managers that "character says more these days than ability. When it comes to all things athletic being equal, the player with the better attitude and moral fortitude is going to get the job."

Hitting upon the national gathering's theme, "Destination: Transformation," Cymbala urged managers to put their trust in God and commit to prayer for his provision.

He testified about his church's need for

\$6 million to fund a downtown worship complex, reporting that pledges for that amount came in two letters within 10 minutes on a Sunday set aside for all-day prayer at the church.

Cymbala also thanked managers for joining in his missionary efforts by placing high priority on his books, "Fresh Faith," and "Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire." The books rank first and second in sales at LifeWay. All royalties are used to fund church ministries.

He encouraged those experiencing difficult times by explaining that trials will also humble and sensitize believers to others' needs. "When you love the people and know what they're going through, you can minister on another level," he said.

Music groups The Katinas, Plus One, Reliant K, and Melody Joy presented special showcases during the conference and worship leader

Travis Cottrell, a Nashville-based musician, led managers in devotions each morning.

Mick Houston, manager of LifeWay's Franklin, Tenn., store, received the award for manager of the year and delivered the keynote address. In speaking about leadership issues, he urged the managers to invest in the people who work in LifeWay stores.

Bruce Munns, vice president of retail operations for LifeWay, said Houston won the prestigious award based on personal leadership as well as outstanding performance in financial operational management.

Mark Scott, president of the LifeWay Christian Stores division, made a special



presentation to Bill Graham, director of the national chain from 1974-92 and originator of the LifeWay name. Graham received a limited edition Thomas Kinkade print.

LifeWay also recognized stores in the following areas:

- Highest sales growth percentage, same store: Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.; Fayetteville, N.C.; and Independence, Mo.
- Highest sales growth percentage, relocated/remodeled stores: Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; and runner-up, Brea, Calif.
- Highest sales percent to budget, new stores: Franklin, Tenn.

LifeWay Christian Stores is a leading provider of biblically based books, music, gifts, apparel, and church supplies as well as Bibles and other Christian products. The chain is a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Jackson LifeWay Christian Store is located at 6380 Ridgewood Court, Suite A, off County Line Road. The store's telephone number is (601) 977-9676. LifeWay Christian Stores may also be accessed on the Internet at www.lifewaystores.com or by telephone at (800) 233-1123.

BIBLEMAN BATTLES EVIL

Managers gathered from LifeWay's 87 stores across the nation for training and inspirational activities, including a Christian merchandise exposition and a laser light and computer-enhanced drama featuring Willie Aames as Bibleman, a Scripture-quoting video superhero for youngsters. Here Bibleman does battle while his helper looks on. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

School board president seeks to set record straight

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (BP) — "We are not in a state of confusion, but in the state of Kansas," said Linda Holloway, Kansas State School Board president in an April 9 appearance at the First Family Church, Overland Park, Kan.

Holloway is president of the school board that came under scrutiny last summer in the state of Kansas when they decided to leave a decision about how to teach evolution up to local school boards.

On the program for a special afternoon session with Duane Gish of the Creation Research Institute of El Cajon, Calif. — who later debated a local evolutionist — Holloway expressed appreciation for the chance to set the record straight about what really happened in Kansas.

"What we did with science standards was really minor," explained Holloway, who said the only change at the state level was to take any references to macro evolution out of the state standardized testing

process and give local school boards the option of whether to teach the material.

Macroevolution is derived from Charles Darwin's theories about species evolving from other species. Microevolution teaches that there is change or evolution within each species that occurs over a period of time.

"Evolution was being presented in a very dogmatic manner," Holloway said. "We have stood for academic freedom instead of dogma. We have stood for freedom of inquiry for students."

Holloway said she was surprised at the response of many of the local and national media who appeared to misunderstand the process and whom she said tried to implicate her personal views into the mix. Even the Kansas Catholic Conference, a group Holloway said represents all Catholic students in parochial or public school, supported the board's move.

"I'm not trying to get my

religion into science, but to get science into science. It doesn't matter whether I am old earth or young earth, students in Kansas deserve to look at both sides," said Holloway. "Let's give them something to think about instead of giving them only the conclusion. It's only fair that students have the opportunity to look at evidence and come to a conclusion."

"What if there is a new discovery?" she asked. "Are we going to censor that out too?"

As far as teaching creation in the public schools, Holloway said that is not up to any state or federal regulation, but up to local school boards — one of the last remaining autonomous forms of local government.

"We did not ban the teaching of evolution in the schools," Holloway said. "In our state we have no control over textbooks nor do we control curriculum."

Though standards vary state to state, the curriculum from which state and even local boards draw their criteria is

produced at the national level.

"Some of the most vicious reaction has been at the national level," said Holloway. The national science curriculum associations, she said, refused to let the state use materials they said were copyrighted. Holloway pointed out that typically materials produced by or for the government at taxpayer expense are not supposed to be copyrighted.

Citing a potential "conflict of interest," she said she also had concerns about the relationships between textbook company publishers and the national education curriculum committees on which they serve.

"There are a lot of things at the national level that I don't understand," said Holloway. "This is where the light needs to start shining — at the national level."

Holloway said there is no evidence to support the idea that leaving out macroevolution will adversely affect the chances for students to attend good colleges.

Fla. pastor to be nominated at SBC meet

WINTER PARK, Fla. (BP)

— Brad Hoffman, senior pastor of First Church of Tuscarilla, Winter Park, will be nominated for first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention during the annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., June 13-14.

Hoffman earned a bachelor of science degree in business administration with a minor in management from Palm Beach Atlantic College in 1985 and the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, in 1988. Hoffman has led the Tuscarilla congregation to become the Model Refugee Church for Antioch Affection, a ministry to ministers and their families that face forced termination from pastorate and staff positions.

New president, doctrinal review top SBC's agenda

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP) — The election of a new president and possible revisions to the historic Baptist Faith and Message confessional statement are on the agenda for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), June 13-14 at the Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.

The theme of the meeting, "Partners in the Harvest Worldwide," is taken from Matthew 9:37-38: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers." The theme also ties into this year's 75th anniversary celebration of the SBC's Cooperative Program channel for funding missions and ministry initiatives.

SBC President Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., is completing his second one-year term in office.

To date, James Merritt, pastor of First Church, Snellville, Ga., is the only announced nominee for the SBC presidency. His name will be placed before messengers by Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church, Dallas.

An SBC official predicted messenger registration of 16,500 messengers for the 143rd session of the SBC in its 155-year history.

"A lot of Southern Baptists will take this opportunity to vacation in central Florida as well as attend the annual meeting," said Lee Porter, longtime SBC registration secretary.

In an effort to attract younger Southern Baptist messengers, the North American Mission Board is hosting a youth rally on June 11 beginning at 7 p.m. in the convention auditorium. Evangelist David Nasser will speak and the contemporary group Foreverafter will lead in worship.

On June 12, students are invited to attend a leadership conference, with a morning session led by North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Robert

E. Reccord, who will speak on principles of leadership, and Scott Grissom, a student evangelism associate for NAMB, who will lead campus evangelism training. Evangelist Jay Strack will lead the afternoon session, and the conference will conclude with a hands-on event at the "Titanic" exhibit at Universal Studios.

For more information or to register, visit the www.studentz.com/sbc Internet site.

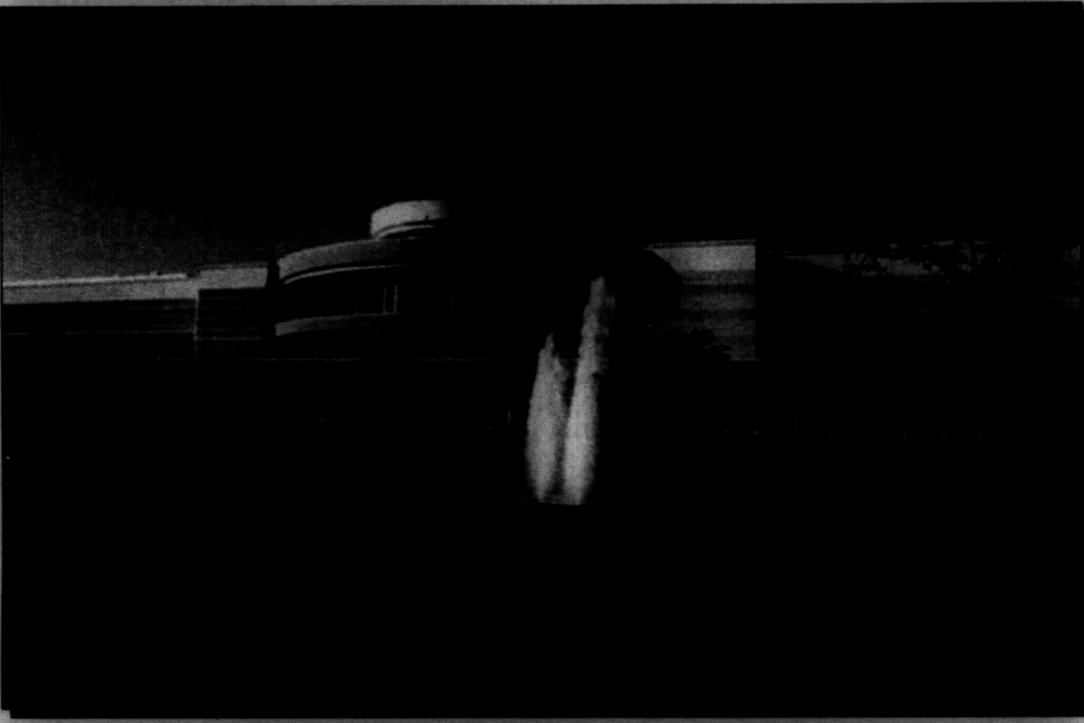
Messengers at the Tues.-Wed. SBC annual meeting will hear preaching, singing, and reports from SBC entities as well as vote on various important matters, including possible recommendations from the Baptist Faith and Message study committee.

Messengers to the 1999 SBC in Atlanta gave Patterson approval to form a study committee to review the Baptist Faith and Message, a statement of Baptist beliefs drafted in 1963 and amended to include an article on the family in 1998. The study committee's recommendations will be made public following its meeting in May.

Messengers will be asked to adopt a 2000-01 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget for SBC entities in the amount of \$167,996,385. More than \$8.4 million over the current year's budget, the proposed budget will retain the same distribution percentages to 12 SBC entities.

Also on the agenda is a proposed change in the Annuity Board's mission statement and ministry assignments. In February, the SBC Executive Committee approved a proposal for the Annuity Board to expand its ministry assignments to include personal investing for Southern Baptist ministers and employees. The Annuity Board also would be allowed to offer institutional investment management services for Southern Baptist organizations.

The two evenings of the annual meeting will feature missions presentations.



Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.

1:00 Pre-Session Praise	1:15 Welcome/Prayer: Sam secretary, Pastors' Conference
1:20 Harvest of Praise: Clark Stewart, Christian artist, Nashville	1:25 The Harvest Requires...The Presence of God: Chuck McAlister, senior pastor, Second Church, Hot Springs, Ark.
1:35 Harvest of Praise: Thom Shomate, Christian artist/director, Cottage Cove Ministries, Nashville	1:55 Harvest of Worshipers: John Jones, minister of music, First Church, Ft. Lauderdale
2:00 The Harvest Requires...Building the Family: Ben Whitten, senior pastor, Idlewild Church, Tampa	2:00 Harvest of Praise
2:05 The Harvest Requires...Willingness to Risk: Curt Dodd, First Church, Merritt Island, Fla.	2:05 The Harvest Requires...A Willingness to Risk: Curt Dodd, First Church, Merritt Island, Fla.
2:30 Prayer & Offering: Jimmy Bisagno, retired senior pastor, First Church, Houston, Tex. (served as Conference President in 1972)	2:35 Prayer & Offering: John Bisagno, retired senior pastor, First Church, Houston, Tex. (served as Conference President in 1972)
2:45 Election of Officers	3:00 Harvest of Praise
3:05 The Harvest Requires...the Word: Steve Gaines, Carrollton, Ga.	3:05 The Harvest Requires...the Word: Steve Gaines, Carrollton, Ga.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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TUESDAY MORNING, JUNE 13

8:00 Inspirational music: *Celebration Choir and Orchestra*, South Biscayne Church, North Port, Fla., Lee Anderson, director

8:15 Congregational Praise and Worship: *Scott C. White*, senior minister of music and worship, First Church, Woodstock, Ga.

8:20 Call to Order: *Paige Patterson*, president, Southern Baptist Convention; president, Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

Registration Report and Constitution of the Convention: *Lee Porter*, SBC registration secretary, retired, Lawrenceville, Ga.

8:30 Prayer: *Doyle Chauncey*, executive director, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Glen Allen, Va.

8:35 Committee on Order of Business (First Report): *Jerry A. Johnson*, chairman, assistant director of development, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

8:40 Welcome: *Jeb Bush*, governor, State of Florida, Tallahassee, Fla.

8:45 Response: *John Sullivan*, executive director, Florida Baptist Convention, Jacksonville, Fla.

8:50 Announcement of Committee on Committees, Credentials, Resolutions, and Tellers

9:00 Theme Interpretation: God's Word and the Worldwide Harvest: *Mark A. Howell*, assistant professor of preaching, Southern Seminary; pastor, Shively Church, Louisville, Ky.

9:15 Local Arrangements Committee Presentation: *John R. (Jack) Wilkerson*, vice president for business and finance, executive committee, Nashville, Tenn.

9:20 Crossover Orlando Report: *Robert E. (Bob) Reccord*, president, North American Mission Board (NAMB), Alpharetta, Ga.

9:25 Introduction of Motions and Resolutions (All resolutions must be presented before today's afternoon session)

9:45 Committee on Nominations Report: *David B. Fannin*, chairman, senior pastor, Nassau Bay Church, Houston, Tex.

9:55 Executive Committee Report (Part 1): *Morris H. Chapman*, president and chief executive officer, Nashville, Tenn.

10:45 Congregational Praise and Worship: *R. Todd Bell*, senior minister of music and worship, Prestonwood Church, Plano, Tex.

10:50 Worship in Music: *Faithful Men*, Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., John Davis, director

10:55 President's Address: *Paige Patterson*

11:35 Benediction: *Steve Turrentine*, pastor, Redrock Southern Church, Las Vegas, Nev.

7:20 Business — Committee on Order of Business (Third Report): *Jerry A. Johnson*

7:30 Theme Interpretation — God's Church in the Worldwide Harvest: *Johnny M. Hunt*, pastor, First Church, Woodstock, Ga.

7:45 Previously scheduled business Reporting Proposed Resolutions God's Worldwide Harvest

8:10 Inspirational Music: *Celebration Choir and Orchestra*, First Church, Woodstock, Ga.

8:15 International Mission Board Report: *Jerry A. Rankin*, president, Richmond, Va.

8:25 International Mission Board Presentation

9:15 Benediction: *James W. (Jim) Richards*, executive director, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, Irving, Tex.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, JUNE 14

8:00 Concert of Praise: *Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra*, First Church, Ocala, Fla., Terry W. Williams, director

8:10 Congregational Praise and Worship: *Gary D. Gaston*, associate minister of music and instrumental, First Church, Woodstock, Ga.

8:15 Prayer: *T. Vaughn Walker*, professor of black church studies, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

8:20 Theme Interpretation — God's Power in the Worldwide Harvest: *Bruce Schmidt*, consultant, Strategic Cities Strategy, North American Mission Board.

8:35 Woman's Missionary Union Report: *Wanda S. Lee*, executive director-treasurer, Birmingham, Ala.

8:45 Election of Officers (Fourth Report)

8:55 Business — Committee on Order of Business (Fourth Report): *Jerry A. Johnson*

9:15 Baptist Faith and Message Report: *Adrian P. Rogers*, chairman, pastor, Bellevue Church, Cordova, Tenn.

Previously Scheduled Business (if time allows)

9:45 Committee on Resolutions (First Report)

10:15 New Orleans Seminary Presentation: *Charles S. (Chuck) Kelley, Jr.*, president, New Orleans Seminary.

10:30 Election of Officers (Fifth)

10:40 Committee on Committees Report

10:50 Annuity Board Report: *O.S. Hawkins*, president and chief executive officer, Dallas, Texas

11:05 Inspirational Music: *This Hope*, Calhoun, Ga.; *Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra*, First Church, Ocala, Fla., Terry W. Williams, director

11:15 Recognition of SBC Presidents: *Morris H. Chapman*

11:25 Presentation of Outgoing Officers: *Morris H. Chapman*

11:30 Presentation of New Officers: *Paige Patterson*

11:35 Convention Message: *Bailey Smith*, evangelist, Atlanta, Ga.

12:10 Benediction: *Richard Vera*, pastor, Emmanuel at Riverside, Denver, Col.

NO WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JUNE 14

6:00 Concert of Praise: *Celebration Choir and Orchestra*, Bell Shoals Church, Brandon, Fla., Simeon A. Nix, director

6:10 Prayer: *Joseph Lyles*, president, African American Fellowship of Southern Baptists, Ft. Washington, Md.

6:15 Business — Committee on Order of Business (Fifth Report),

Election of 2001 Convention Sermon Preacher, Alternate, Music Director: *Jerry A. Johnson*

6:25 Previously Scheduled Business

6:40 Committee on Resolutions (Final Report)

7:10 Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) Report: *Richard D. Land*, president, Nashville, Tenn.

7:20 North American Mission Board Report: *Robert E. (Bob) Reccord*, president, Alpharetta, Ga.

God's Harvest in America

7:30 Theme Interpretation — God's People and the Worldwide Harvest: *Jay Sekulow*, attorney, Atlanta, Ga.

7:50 Congregational Praise and Worship: *Scott C. White*

7:55 Concert of Praise: *Celebration Choir and Orchestra*, Bell Shoals Church, Brandon, Fla.

8:00 ERLC and NAMB Presentations

9:15 Benediction: *Paul K. S. Kim*, pastor, Berkland Church, Cambridge, Mass.

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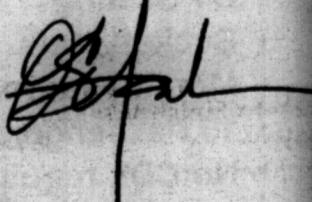
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ANNUITY BOARD

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Members of First Church, Chicora

First Church, Chicora, recently completed construction of a new Family Life Center. The building includes a large, modern kitchen, dining hall, space for educational classrooms, a gymatorium complete with full-sized basketball court, and physical space for various church and community functions. The church is also entering into a continuing building plan. They plan to remodel/enlarge the existing sanctuary and baptistry, reclaim the space now vacant from the old fellowship hall and kitchen, and complete the landscaping and parking areas. The interior of the pastor's home has recently been updated. David Roberson is pastor.

Williamsburg Church, Collins, will host a ladies conference Saturday, May 27 from 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Janet Pope and Sara Ishee will be the guest speakers.

The Bible Tones will be in concert at Calvary Church, New Augusta, May 27 at 7 p.m. Revival will begin May 28 at 7 p.m. Guest speaker will be Jamie Coulter.

Little Country Preacher, The Life and Ministry of W.T. Holloway is now available in eBook format. Holloway, 57-year veteran of Southern Baptist work, served small rural churches in Mississippi between the years of 1936 and 1993, the year of his death. This biography was written by his son Joel and is available on the Internet at <http://www.booklocker.com/bookpages/jaholloway.html>.

Revival dates

Immanuel, Natchez: May 21-24; Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Paul Wilson, evangelist; Wayne Spencer, pastor.

Shiloh, Vaiden: May 28-31; Sunday, homecoming services, 11 a.m. followed by dinner on the grounds; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; David Bartlett, Greenwood, evangelist; Doug Warren, pastor, music.

Liberty, Flowood: May 14-17; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Billy Smith, evangelist; Chuck Myers, music; John Cofer, pastor.



Children of Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson

Bethel Church, Poplarville, will host a Conversational English and English as a Second Language (CE/ESL) Workshop, May 19-20 and 26-27, Fridays from 6:30-9:30 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Registration is \$25. Anyone completing both weekends will get North American Mission Board certification for CE/ESL. For more information, contact Kathy Burns at (601) 292-3324 or toll-free (800) 748-1651.



The preschool and children's departments of Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson, held an Easter egg hunt at the church on April 22. The children enjoyed a fun day of hunting eggs and playing games.

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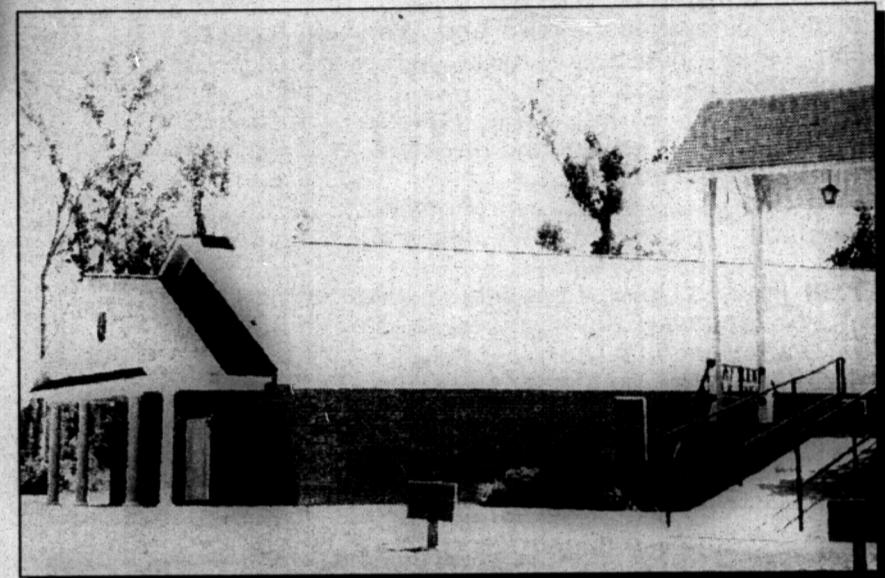
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The Mississippi Association held its quarterly meeting April 24 at New Salem Church, Liberty. There were over 100 in attendance, nine professions of faith, and 28 rededications. Guest speakers were David Fortenberry and Gene Hoyt with Outdoor Evangelism Association, Amite, La.

For the Sake of Zion is sponsoring an End Times Prophecy Conference May 18 at Orange Grove Church, Gulfport. Guest speakers are Clark Stewart and Mike Routon. Sessions begin at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. For more information call (662) 327-0495.



Shady Grove Church, Bogue Chitto, will celebrate its 146th anniversary on May 21. Sunday School will begin at 9:45 a.m. followed by worship led by John Flowers, former pastor. A fellowship luncheon will follow the service. A dedication service for the new sanctuary will begin at 1:30 p.m.

Empowering Ministers and Congregations in the Face of HIV/AIDS will be held May 26 from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Holiday Inn Southwest in

Jackson. This educational opportunity will focus on ways to motivate congregations and communities to take action in the fight against AIDS and is sponsored by the Mississippi State Department of Health. For more information contact Lumbe' Davis at (601) 576-7723.

Marlon Seaney is available for pulpit supply and/or bivocational pastorate. He is a graduate of Clarke College, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary. He may be reached at (601) 939-0684, or 611 Pemberton Dr., Apt. 403, Pearl, MS 39208.

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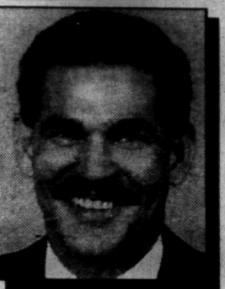
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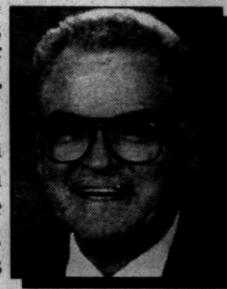
Central Brookhaven, has called **Frank Rice** as pastor effective April 23. Rice received his education at the University of Mississippi, New Orleans Seminary, and Trinity Theological Seminary. He previously pastored Oak Grove Church, Meridian.



First Church, Carthage has called Matt DeBord as pastor.

He is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary. He previously pastored First Church, Jonesboro, La.

H. Cliff Davis, retired home missionary, resigned as pastor of Lake Harbor Church, Rankin Association effective April 30. Davis is available for pulpit supply, interim pastorate, and church growth revivals. He



Rice

may be reached at 608 Heatherview Drive, Brandon, Ms 39047, by calling (601) 829-2877, or by e-mail: Cliffmary@lwol.com.

Jim Thrash is the new pastor of Perkinston Church, Gulf Coast Association. After completing a career in the U. S. Air Force, Thrash pastored an International Baptist church in Europe. For



Thrash

the past two years he has been a church planter in Tampa, Fla. Thrash earned his M.Div. degree from New Orleans Seminary. He previously served churches in Lowndes and Harrison counties.

First Church, Brandon, has called **Phil Jones** as Minister of Music and Worship and **Jeff Ingram** as Minister of Adults and Ministries effective March 27. Jones previously served Morrison Heights Church, Clinton; and Ingram previously served Highland Church, Vicksburg. Gene Henderson is pastor of First Church.

Homecoming

West Shady Grove, Waynesboro: June 4; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner in fellowship hall; speaker will be Michael Street, Moselle. Ervin Mooney is pastor.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College (WCC) will hold commencement exercises on May 13 at 10 a.m. in the Dumas Smith Auditorium on the Hattiesburg campus. Approximately 228



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students will receive baccalaureate degrees. Guest speaker will be James R. Davis, superintendent of the Hattiesburg Public Schools. Davis earned a doctorate in school administration from Illinois State University. The recipient of numerous awards including the Rotary International Distinguished Service Award, he served for six years as the mayor of Rock Island, Illinois. Cloyd Ezell, WCC vice president for academic affairs, will present candidates and Larry Kennedy, president, will confer degrees. Guests will be seated on a first-come basis until the capacity of approximately 1,200 people is reached.

Approximately 63 students will receive graduate degrees from William Carey College (WCC) at ceremonies to be held May 12 at 7 p.m. in the Dumas Smith Auditorium on the Hattiesburg campus. Tommy King, professor and director of graduate psychology programs at WCC will be commencement speaker. A graduate of WCC King received the master of education degree at Liberty University and the doctorate of education at the University of Southern Mississippi. Guests will be seated on a first-come basis until the capacity of approximately 1,200 people is reached.

Approximately 136 students will receive degrees at William Carey College's (WCC) Coast campus commencement exercises to be held May 13 at 2:30 p.m. at First Church, Gulfport.



Commencement speaker will be Bill Baker, director of church relations and lecturer in Biblical Studies at WCC. Baker received a bachelor of arts degree and a doctoral degree from Mississippi State University, and a bachelor of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary. Guests will be seated on a first-come basis until the capacity of approximately 580 people is reached.

Thirteen students from the Baptist Student Union (BSU) of Blue Mountain College (BMC), along with Tracy Moser, BSU director, and John F. Sumner Jr., retired BSU director, led a week long evangelistic program to reach children in Las Americas and Vista Alegre, Panama. The team presented clown and puppet programs, taught arts and crafts, played games, and shared the Gospel with the children. They also performed skits and songs in Spanish. Some of the BMC students could speak Spanish and several of the Panamanians could speak English, so the two groups were able to communicate their love for God to each other.



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Arts ministry creating symphony of praise

CORDOVA, Tenn. (BP) — A church's 16-year commitment is reaping rewards through an amazing number of aspiring and accomplished musicians who use their abilities at church and in the community.

In 1984, Bellevue Church of Cordova, Tenn., began a performing arts center (PAC) with a class to teach 12 students to play stringed instruments. By fall of the same year, the center had grown to 28 students with three teachers.

Today's center offers classes in voice and 16 instruments. Almost 340 students and 34 teachers keep the center's classrooms full. Both private and group lessons are offered at modest fees that pay faculty and cover some expenses.

Bellevue's long-term investment in growing musicians has contributed to a strong music ministry of 3,200 persons, 1,850 of them in graded choirs.

Instrumental groups include three marching bands, 18 ensembles, and 11 choirs. More than 4,100 persons participate in various choirs.

"One day, while still a young minister of music, I realized I was praying for some other minister of music to develop singers so they could send them to me," recalled Jim Whitmire, who has

served for 25 years as Bellevue's minister of music. "I realized I needed to develop my own musicians and then send them out."

It's a two-way street. Our church has 27,000 members, and I think God will hold us accountable for the people we do not teach or at least offer to teach.

"I don't want large numbers to discourage small churches," Whitmire said. "The principles I use to build a music ministry work in any size church."

The context in which numbers are important is in the wide involvement of the congregation for major music events, such as the singing Christmas tree, the Easter pageant, and a Fourth of July extravaganza.

Carter Threlkeld, minister of instrumental music for 17 years, said 800-900 persons are required for special events. Some of those serve as ushers, scene painters, seamstresses, cast, orchestra, nursery workers, and hostesses.

PAC teachers, all members of Bellevue, also participate in either the orchestra or choir.

The center's goals are to grow musicians and teach them to use their talents for ministry. For example, the bands march in the Strawberry Festival and at the Christmas parade in Memphis. Providing opportunities for students to play or sing at schools and nursing homes makes participation in the center a ministry with a mission. Threlkeld said he believes in marrying music and ministry.

The maturing of students comes in three phases — learning to walk (learning to play or sing),

living out a witness (through performances in nursing homes, prisons and other community ministries), and leading in worship (becoming part of the adult choir or youth and adult orchestras).

Creatively named instrumental ensembles are closely associated with the center.

For example, there are Victory Violins, High Strung (strings), Flutes of the Spirit, Fiddlers of Faith, and King's Brass, among others. Lisa Love, string director, was in Bellevue's choir program as a child and began teaching at the center when she was 14.

"I travel with the High Strung group,"

she said. "On one trip to Nashville we were practicing outside our hotel. It was a beautiful night, and the hotel clerk came out."

Lisa said the students saw the real reason they were in Nashville when one of the student's mothers witnessed to the clerk, who was saved

that night. Bellevue Church, Cordova,

Tenn., member Mollie Anderson, age 14, concentrates during a flute lesson at Bellevue. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

Students at the PAC use similar accolades to describe their experiences, both in learning and in ministry opportunities.

Adrienne Littlefield, a 14-year-old who began violin studies at age 5, said she feels "really blessed to have Christian teachers and being able to play in the orchestra, being around the music leaders in our

church and learning to praise God with music instead of just pleasing yourself."

Cello player Ryan Shelton, age 15, began lessons about five years ago. Those lessons were not just for cello. He also plays piano, bass, violin, and trumpet.

"It's amazing the level of teaching you get here," he said. "You are surrounded by musicians."

Shelton said he participates in Performing Arts Center at Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy) including mission trips, "now that I can play instruments."

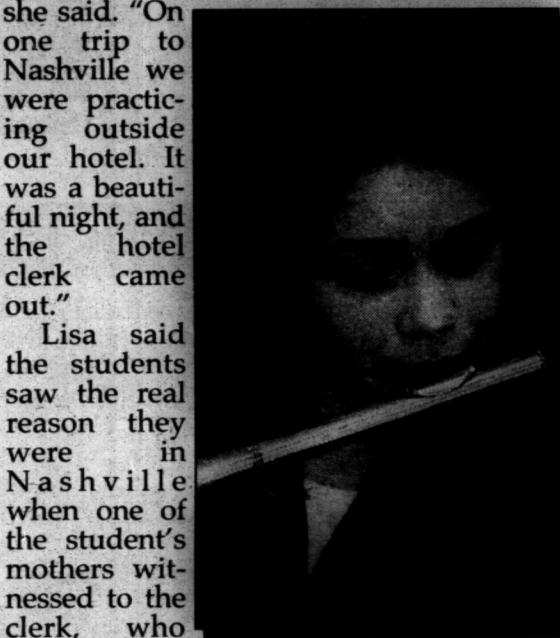
Mollie and Larry Anderson, sister and brother, attest to the value of the PAC and music ministry in their lives.

"It has helped me a lot," said Mollie, age 14 and a flute student. "I used to be really nervous about playing in public, but now I can concentrate."

Trips to play in nursing homes, she said, "really bless me."

Larry, 17 years of age and a trumpet student, said the PAC faculty "is not just teaching me trumpet, but they are teaching me Christian values."

LEARNING TO PLAY — Bellevue Church, Cordova, Tenn., teacher Paula Threlkeld (lower right corner) helps even very young children learn how to play the harp. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)



PRAISING GOD

THROUGH MUSIC

— Bellevue Church, Cordova, Tenn., member Pierce Martin, 10, is learning not only how to play the violin, but also how to use his talent

to praise God. He and 340 other students study at the Performing Arts Center at Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy) including



CFIDS Day declared by Musgrove

Mississippi Governor Ronnie Musgrove has declared May 12 as Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS) Day in Mississippi, according to former Mississippi Baptist pastor Ken Cook of Brandon, who suffers from the disease commonly known as chronic fatigue syndrome. Cook said the CFIDS/M.E. Association of Mississippi will hold its monthly meeting May 13 at River Oaks Hospital. For more information, contact Cook at (601) 824-1108.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

I have just been diagnosed with a terminal disease, and I really want my grandchildren to remember me as a healthy, vibrant woman — not bedridden and wasting away. Should I leave specific instructions that they are not to attend my bedside and funeral?

Death is a very real issue in our lives, and children need to understand that fact. By not allowing them to attend your bedside and funeral, you will deny them closure and leave them with difficult questions. Make the most of your health and then as you begin failing, talk with them about the changes. Always assure them of your love. Share Christ with them and explain that he will be with them through this

entire ordeal. Talk with their parents so they can complement your actions. Life is all about finishing strong. These actions on your part will make it easier for them to say goodbye, because you have left them in peace. As a Christian, you know where you are going and someday they will join you there because of your witness.

My husband is all-controlling, and I've given up trying to talk with him about it. What should I do now?

You haven't completely given up, or you would not be writing for help. You are frustrated and looking for a relationship that brings meaning to you. Your husband is all-con-

trolling because he is insecure and fearful. You may know why or you may not. Most controlling people keep things to themselves and do not allow people to get close; they are afraid of someone taking advantage of them and hurting them. Pray for your husband, then step back and let the Holy Spirit speak to his scared, hardened heart. Talk with him in softness (even when it is not returned) and don't try forcing his hand on this subject. Affirm him for the things he does well and encourage him in his strengths. Become his cheerleader and support — but don't serve as his doormat. That leaves a large area in between so you can work and pray to win him over.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. In central Mississippi, Ron Mumbower can be heard from 9-10 a.m. each Wednesday on WHJT-FM 93.5. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

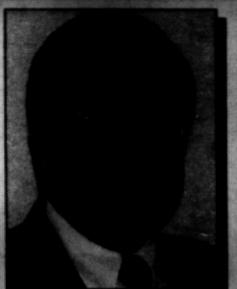
From suffering to glory

2 Corinthians 4:1-18

By Neel Grantham

No one said it would be easy. Life is tough. Living the Christian life is tough. While God never promised us a rose garden, he did promise he would always be there to help. The last words of the Great Commission say "...lo, I am with you always...."

Life wasn't easy for Jesus or his disciples. In his ministry he was always being challenged and tested, even while doing miracles such as healing or casting out demons. His service helped many, but angered others. Jesus warned his followers that as the world hated him, the world would hate them as well.



Grantham

Paul was also an example of great suffering in his life of serving God. As you read 2 Cor. 11:23-28 you discover the many ways he suffered. Out of that list, how many ways have you suffered for Christ's sake? Very few today suffer in ministry like that, especially in our country. Most severe suffering occurs elsewhere.

The faith of the suffering servants enabled them to continue in ministry in the face of death, hardship, and thanklessness. We can exercise that faith today. As we grow in our service to God and others, so our suffering is likely to

increase. As we progress in the faith we must remember the eternal value of serving.

Ministry's anchor (vv. 5-6). Paul and his co-laborers could not have endured the hardships of ministry had they been in it for the wrong reasons. They couldn't have survived

in their own strength. He states here their message was simple. It was Jesus. They were servants to the Corinthians for Jesus' sake. It was in the power of God who "shined in our hearts" that empowered their message of light to the gentiles.

The anchor of any ministry effort must be Jesus. We must guard against being anchored to anything else. For our glory, in our strength, for a pat on our back, a little recognition — these just don't cut it in the Kingdom's work.

Suffering as servants is really worth it when it is for the Kingdom of God.

Ministry's anguish (vv. 7-12). The suffering of Kingdom servants results in the demonstration of the power of God in their lives. In the flesh we are nothing apart from God. However, in Jesus, we can do all things.

In verses 8-9 Paul refers to different expressions of suffering. Notice after each expression of suffering, words of victory follow. Why is that? It is because we serve a risen Savior who lives and demonstrates power over death. We have victory in Jesus. As long as we keep things in the eternal perspective, Jesus is made manifest in us. Others then can see the power of God in our lives. Believers can be encouraged by our service and the lost can be drawn to Jesus. The reality of the risen Savior is seen by all.

Ministry's assurance (vv. 13-18). While life and ministry are difficult at times, there are assurances for the believer. While we may be beaten down in our bodies, we are renewed in our inner self as we serve others. Our afflictions are just temporary. We suffer for just a little while. It prepares us for eternal glory. We live by faith in the eternal things, not by sight in temporal things.

In today's church it seems to be harder and harder to find committed servants. Many believers don't want to work or sacrifice much. They have the idea that ministry is easy and affirming. When it is not, they tend to back off. I'm so glad Jesus didn't back off in the garden or at the cross. Praise God that after all the suffering of Christ, he was raised in glory!

Grantham is pastor of Pineview Church, Clinton.

LIFE AND WORK

Honest about sin

2 Samuel 12:1-14

By Matt Loving

Many people today are morally confused. They have adopted a relativistic ethic that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Because of situational ethics, many people neither acknowledge nor understand their own personal sinfulness.

Ironically, people are looking for an answer to the present moral chaos in our society. The answer can be found in biblical truth. We must each admit that we are sinners, confess to God that he alone can forgive us, recognize that God does hold people accountable for sin, and that he forgives those who genuinely confess their sin.

In David's life we find an



Loving

example of what sin does to people and what, in turn, can be done about sin.

Realize sin's seriousness (vv. 1-6). In these verses, Nathan the prophet confronts King David about the sin in his life by telling him a parable. It illustrates that any sin in our lives has terrible consequences. The mentality that it's okay as long as I don't get caught or no one gets hurt is not a scriptural principle.

Whether the results of our sinful choices are evident is not the issue. Just as Nathan explained this through his story, I think we too should explain likewise to people who don't understand sin.

C.S. Lewis once wrote, "Let us go back to the man who says that a thing cannot be wrong unless it hurts some other human being. He quite understands that he must not damage the other ships in the convoy, but does it not make a great difference whether his ship is his own property or not? If somebody else made me, for his own purposes, then I shall have a lot of duties which I should not have if I simply belonged to myself." (Mere Christianity, p.72-73).

Face your own sinfulness (vv. 7-9). Nathan further confronted David by revealing that the rich man in the story is David. The prophet thus shows Christians a pattern for combating the moral confusion of the day. Before we can help others understand the seriousness of sin, we must sincerely try to explain the concept in ways that will get them thinking.

Many people are better at seeing others' faults than recognizing their own. Before any supernatural change can happen, people must be willing to face their own sinfulness before God. This initial step is the hardest one to make.

Admit your sins (v. 13). Facing your sinfulness does not automatically mean you are forgiven. In this verse, David admitted that he had sinned against the Lord and then God forgave him.

God will graciously forgive you when you genuinely confess your sin to him, admitting that he alone is Lord. Even though David confessed to Nathan, this verse is not the establishment of confessionalism. I believe that it simply provides the precedence for Christian people to remain in intimate fellowship with Christ so that they can always be ready to help others in need as God would have them to do.

Remember sin's consequences (vv. 10-12,14). This is a stark reminder that sin's sting is very deadly. Although God forgave David of sin, he and his relatives still had to suffer the consequences. The terrible calamities that occurred to him and his family were the results of his sinful behavior. This is not to say that all such tragedy is because of sin in your life, but rather the consequences were applicable to David.

When we are faced with temptation, we must remember that God's rule in this life is that we will reap what we sow. This passage of 2 Sam. should make us be more aware that God holds each of us accountable for our life, that our sinful choices reap terrible consequences beyond ourselves, and that God will forgive one who sincerely calls out to him.

Loving is minister of youth at Oak Hill Church, Poplarville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Bargaining with God

Judges 11:4-6, 30-36

By Keith Smyser

"Lord if you will answer this prayer I will follow you the rest of my life," many have prayed. It seems once the crisis is over promises are not always kept. Why do we bargain with the Lord or attempt to manipulate God into answering our prayers?

This week's lesson looks at Jephthah, who took his promise very seriously. We can learn from his mistakes.

Requested leader (vv. 4-6). After some time had passed, war was breaking out and Jephthah's name surfaced as a possible leader. Jephthah had many commendable qualities including negotiation skills (11:5-10, 12:28; 12:1-3), his devotion to the Lord (11:11, 29-31,



Smyser

39), and his military skill (11:1,33; 12:4).

Jephthah was summoned and commissioned by the people to be the new commander. Sadly, God was given little place in the proceedings except to confirm the choice of the people (v.10). "It is significant to note that a commander was someone who performed some of the functions of a judge. The word judge is not used here, God was the only one who raised up Judges." (Nelson Study Bible) Perhaps the people knew they had not involved God in the process. When we leave God out of the process then the process will be flawed!

Rash promise (vv. 30-33). Worried that he might not win

the war with Ammonites, Jephthah makes a vow unto the Lord (v.31). Jephthah made a vow despite the fact Scripture tells us (11:29) "the Spirit of the Lord was with Jephthah." The Lord's Spirit was to equip Jephthah for the task of delivering God's people and had nothing to do with the vow Jephthah had made.

Jephthah was bargaining with God and his efforts were misguided for three reasons: (1) the Lord's people are to seek to do the Lord's will, not to seek to manipulate the Lord with bargains to get him to do their will. (2) Commitments to God should be made intelligently, not blindly (Luke 14:25-33). (3) This misguided pledge indicated a clear lack of faith from Jephthah for he had indicated he believed God would intervene on his behalf (11:9, 27).

Let us ask ourselves some

tough questions. Do we practice fasting to coerce God into doing what we want? Do we give our tithes in order to be further blessed? God is sovereign and cannot be coerced into doing what we may want! Are there other possible ways we try to negotiate with God by our actions or conduct?

Nowhere in Scripture is Jephthah condemned for making and keeping his rash vow. Jephthah set a good example for how serious we should take the keeping of promises made to God (see Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:1-3).

Regretful result (vv. 34-36). Commentators disagree whether or not Jephthah sacrificed his daughter to the Lord. Some commentators say she was not sacrificed, only that Jephthah carried out his vow. Two reasons are given: (1) human sacrifice was contrary to the Law of Moses (Deut. 12:31; 18:10) and (2) the daughter bewails or weeps

about never marrying (11:37-38) and remaining a virgin. She could have been dedicated to the service of the Lord for the rest of her life.

Other commentators think that the most natural reading of 11:30, 31, and 39 indicate that Jephthah offered her up in a sacrifice. The two months mentioned (v.37) were only preparation for her impending death. If she had lived, she would have had the rest of her life to bemoan her situation.

Crucial to our understanding this passage is to know three things, (1) Jephthah regretted his vow, (2) life is precious and sacred, and (3) God never requires human sacrifice. Jephthah and his daughter exhibited great devotion to the Lord. However, we should make promises or commitments to God carefully to be sure our promises are in line with the Word of God.

Smyser is associate pastor of First Church, Starkville.

'SearchLight' tops yearlong Chicago effort



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

CHICAGO (BP) — They call Chicago "the windy city," a moniker drawn from the constant breezes blasting off Lake Michigan — but this year Southern Baptists and other evangelicals are praying a fresh breeze of Spirit-led revival will make its presence known with just as much intensity.

Chicago is one of two cities receiving special attention from Southern Baptists nationally this year through a North American Mission Board-coordinated effort known as Strategic Focus Cities. Beginning this year in Chicago and Phoenix, the mission is to impact two major cities each year with the gospel of Jesus Christ as never before.

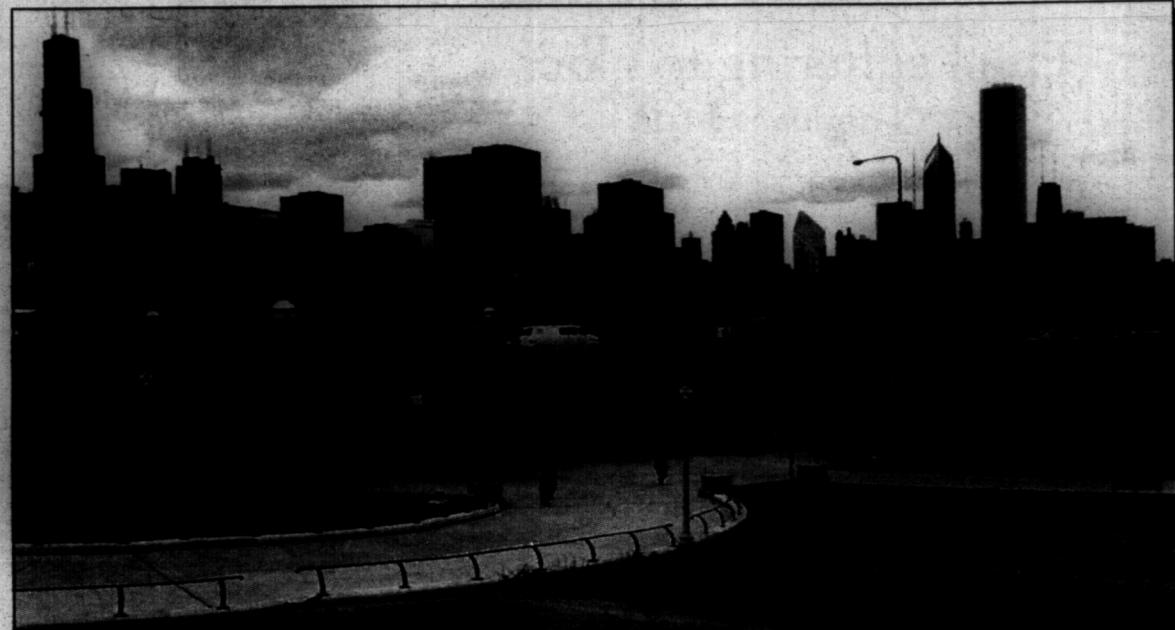
Activities are planned throughout the year in the four Southern Baptist associations and 276 churches that make up what locals refer to as Chicagoland — training conferences, block parties, prayer journeys, revival meetings, area wide-crusades, even two evangelistic circuses planned for two locations in June. To help new Christians grow in their faith and serve effectively, new churches of all varieties are being started.

If there is a central focus for the effort — which in Chicago operates under the name "Celebrate Jesus 2000" — it is the one-day evangelistic blitz planned for July 8 known as SearchLight.

Through SearchLight, tens of thousands of evangelical Christians will draw together to "search out" those in need of the gospel and share with them the light of Jesus Christ — in homes, public areas, and through a variety of events on the shore of Lake Michigan in downtown Chicago's Grant Park.

"We have to take on the responsibility for which God has called us," said SearchLight director Tom Kleinfeldt. He noted the parable in Luke 15:8-10, where Christ teaches that in the same way a woman will rejoice after finding one lost coin out of 10, "there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."

"The lost coin is not going to become unlost by itself," Kleinfeldt said.



SEARCHLIGHT CHICAGO — Chicago's sprawling Grant Park, located between the city's massive downtown region and the shore of Lake Michigan, will serve as a staging area of sorts for SearchLight, a July 8 evangelism emphasis involving thousands of volunteers and churches across the metro area. (BP photo by James Dotson)

"Somebody has to reach out and find it. So we feel like our call is to go looking for people who don't know Jesus, and then when we find them we share the light."

Local church efforts will be focused on the primary themes of the "Lighthouses of Prayer" movement that is also a part of the emphasis: praying for people, caring for people, and ultimately sharing the gospel. While all three are present in most of the efforts, the theme illustrates the varied aspects of effective evangelism.

One group of about 60 North American Mission Board employees will spend much of their time the week before SearchLight working through the Chicago Grace Place, a new Southern Baptist ministry center being funded by Strategic Focus Cities in a high-density area of the city.

The event in Grant Park will involve day-

long entertainment — including a gospel music festival — as well as volunteers who will walk throughout the park sharing Christ.

The "Taste of Chicago" event is expected to bring thousands to the area.

In the evening, volunteers participating from across the city will converge on the park for an evening celebration.

"It would just be prayer, celebration, and testimonies of what people have experienced," said Bill Seitz, special projects implementer for the association.

"There might be a chance to do some more witnessing," he added, noting that other plans are still being developed.

For more information on the events planned for Chicago this summer, visit the www.chicago2000.net Internet site or call (800) 645-2412.

Couple spearheads Strategic Focus church plant

OTTAWA, Ill. (BP) — Lewis Clarkson has a passion for seeing people come to faith in Christ. "I've always loved to witness and win souls," said the 80-year-old retiree. "I've been doing that for years and years."

With the help of the Strategic Focus Cities/Celebrate Jesus 2000 effort focused on nearby Chicago, Clarkson's passion is being used to help plant a new Southern Baptist mission in his hometown of Ottawa.

Each Monday night since October, Clarkson and his wife, Lucy, have hosted a Bible study in their home, an effort that thus far has resulted in several professions of faith in Christ and about 50 prospective members for the town's only Southern Baptist congregation.

The Clarksons are among about 275 individuals involved in "Calling out the Called," a strategy for mobilizing laity for church planting in the Three Rivers Baptist Association located southwest of Chicago.

Through Strategic Focus Cities — coordinated by the North American Mission Board in cooperation with local churches and associations — Southern Baptists are directing

resources and volunteer efforts toward church planting and evangelism in two major cities yearly, beginning this year in Chicago and Phoenix.

In "Calling out the Called," groups of churches in the association work together to sponsor new works. Since the challenge was placed before church-

es last year, volunteers have been organized into teams responsible for coordinating areas of work such as door-to-door surveying and Bible study leadership.

The Clarksons got involved when the challenge was placed before them at their home church, Erven Avenue Baptist



CHURCH PLANTERS — Lewis (right) and Lucy (center) Clarkson chat with their pastor, Don Evans, in the living room of their home in Ottawa, Ill. The Clarksons hosted a Bible study to help form the core group of a new Southern Baptist mission congregation planned for Ottawa. (BP photo by James Dotson)

Church in Streator about 20 miles away. The church recently has experienced renewed passion for evangelism through participation in FAITH evangelism training.

"Things really were moving, and the church was just ready to go and do something," said Don Evans, pastor of the congregation, which serves as the "mentoring church" for the mission in Ottawa.

The Clarksons were an ideal choice to host the Bible study, which meets in the family room of their small 1940's-era home.

Calling out the Called "is asking people to develop the ministry that God has called them to do, or to discover the ministry God has for them," Evans said.

The Ottawa mission got a jump-start last summer when a group of about 20 youth from Gainesville, Texas, helped by knocking on 1,500 doors surveying residents about their interest in a new church or Bible study.

Recently a mission pastor, Steve Griswold, was brought on the field to continue to lead the Bible study and build the group into a congregation.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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FCL GM AFXI MY DFPP,
MSFM, TSIC KIPOP TFP
ZIMOZCIL, MSI DIYDBI
NBFLBR ZIAIGWIL SGX:
EYZ MSIR TIZI FBB TFG-
MGCN EYZ SGX.

BOVI IGNSM: EYZMR

Clue: R = Y

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Three: Twenty-Nine